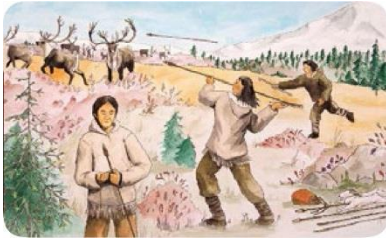


# 500 Generations of Continuity, Change and Adaptation



## TIMELINE OVERVIEW

**We designed this timeline of Vermont history to emphasize that history and archaeology are about people.**

History timelines generally present "milestones" in history. We designed this timeline of Vermont history to emphasize that history and archaeology are about people; dates and events are simply markers along the human story.

The 12,500 year span of Vermont's human history equals 500 generations, with one generation comprising 25 years. Most archaeologists will be comfortable with our timeline divisions. However, as we approach the entry point of Europeans and first contacts with the Native peoples in northeastern North America, picking one date gets more challenging. The Norse explored the coasts of northeastern North America for a long time. Thus far, L'Anse aux Meadows (see **Panel 2100 Before Present to 1550 AD**), at the northern tip of Newfoundland and dating to 1000 AD, is the only documented settlement site. The next documented European voyage was Italian mariner Giovanni Caboto's trip in 1497. He sailed for the English by the familiar name of John Cabot. For documented trips, we then jump to 1534 to Jacques Cartier's first voyage to Labrador and Newfoundland. After his exploratory voyage, the bays of Newfoundland, at least, and undoubtedly elsewhere, became busy places with many curious travelers paying lots of money to sail over from Europe to look around (picture 16th century cruise ships). In Vermont, Samuel de Champlain's trip in 1609 up the lake occurred decades after the Native-European fur trade was in full swing. For the start of the Contact period in Vermont, we thus split the difference and started it at 1550. It is likely that by this time Vermont's Native people were participating in the complex web of relationships arising from the fur trade and were being affected by European contact.

**Our knowledge of these long ago generations and environmental conditions come from the broader Northeast.**

While striving to focus on the Vermont story, our knowledge of these long ago generations and environmental conditions come from the broader Northeast. Thus, much of Vermont's deep-time history is really the history of the greater Northeast with cultural, environmental, and geographic differences. Vermont's archaeological sites from these different time periods anchor our knowledge to Vermont. The additional readings on this **Read More....** give you a glimpse of the Vermont sites that informed this timeline.

**Archaeologists use clues from archaeology, geology, soils science, botany, climate science, osteology, paleontology, and ethnography to piece together this long history.**

Without records and people to confirm the "facts" of long-ago history, archaeologists use clues from archaeology, geology, soils science, botany, climate science, osteology, paleontology, and ethnography to piece together this long history. When we enter the more recent past and the availability of written and visual records, we can look to a vast array of primary source documents such as journals, probate records, maps, newspapers, photographs, and paintings to provide clues to past lives. Archaeology is a subfield of anthropology, the study of people, societies, and cultures. Archaeologists are thus trained to look at all possible sources of information to help them interpret the limited and silent clues found in archaeological sites. To better understand the sites of ancient Native people, archaeologists look to historically documented and contemporary Indigenous peoples across the greater Northeast and beyond. Their customs and behaviors as well as their day-to-day artifacts, technologies, clothing, crafts, hunting and fishing tools and traditions, ceremonialism, and so much more give us some insights into the long-decomposed, long-decayed, material remains of bone, wood, animal skin, and fiber that generally no longer exist in the archaeological record. Contemporary Abenakis

and ethnographic studies from the last two centuries fill out our picture of Indigenous societies: myths and legends, games, political and social organization, and more.

### What does "Before Present" Mean?

Archaeologists and historians express time in various ways. We have chosen to use "Before Present" in our timeline, with the "present" being the year 2000AD. As radiocarbon dates have been recalibrated in the last twenty years to reflect numerous variables that skewed them (some dates were too young and some were too old), older dates such those in the Paleo Indian and Archaic periods of history are more accurate. "Before Present" best coincides with the true age of the past occurrences.

### A few additional resources to learn more:

#### Vermont archaeology:

[Vermont archaeology](http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/preservation/education/archaeology): [http://accd.vermont.gov/strong\\_communities/preservation/education/archaeology](http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/preservation/education/archaeology)

#### Vermont's Abenaki:

[Vermont's Abenakis](http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/preservation/education/native_americans):

[http://accd.vermont.gov/strong\\_communities/preservation/education/native\\_americans](http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/preservation/education/native_americans)

#### Vermont's 12,500 year Native history:

[A Powerful History: The Archaeology of the Native People in the Champlain Lowlands](http://www.velco.com/uploads/documents/powerfulhistory.pdf)

<http://www.velco.com/uploads/documents/powerfulhistory.pdf>

#### Recalibrated radiocarbon dates:

[INTCAL98 Radiocarbon Age Calibration, 24,000-0 cal BP](https://journals.uair.arizona.edu/index.php/radiocarbon/article/viewFile/3781/3206). Minze Stuiver, Paula J. Reimer, Edouard Bard, J. Warren Beck, G. S. Burr, Konrad A. Hughen, Bernd Kromer, Gerry McCormac, Johannes Van Der Plicht, and Marco Spurk. RADIOCARBON, VOL. 40, No. 3, 1998, P.1041-1083.

<https://journals.uair.arizona.edu/index.php/radiocarbon/article/viewFile/3781/3206>.

#### A quick overview of Vermont history:

*We Vermonters: Perspectives on the Past*. Edited by Michael Sherman and Jennie Versteeg. 1992. Vermont Historical Society.

G Peebles  
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